Religious Book Club BULLETIN

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The September Book

Because it is the most competent and brilliant interpretation of the historical antecedents of the present crisis in German Protestantism, and at the same time a highly informing survey of the major trends in German theological thought, the Editorial Committee has selected

THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S

By Paul Banwell Means

288 pages. $2.50

Other important volumes covering a wide range of religious themes are reviewed on the following pages.

Religious Book Club.

THE fortunes of the German Church in the present momentous hour are now seen to have pronounced significance not alone for Germany but for Christianity throughout the entire Western world. Few things on the religious horizon of today are so important as the issues that are at stake within German Protestantism, and between German Protestantism and the German state. For an understanding of those issues, and especially of the historical and theological backgrounds out of which they have arisen, no other book is so indispensable as this new study by Dr. Means.

To comprehend the situation in Germany one must have more than a casual knowledge of Lutheranism as it has developed in Germany, and this Dr. Means amply possesses and shares with his readers. He finds that German Lutheranism has long had certain characteristics which were calculated to issue both in the alienation of the Church from the working masses and in the hyper-nationalism of a "totalitarian" state. Placing its emphasis too exclusively on the inner life, German Protestantism fostered a type of pietism which furnished no adequate criticism of the state, of society, or of the economic order, and so lent itself to an unquestioning support of inherited patterns and of whatever demands the state might make.

Turning to more recent history, the author describes the ascendancy of Marxist ideas, the development of Christian socialism, and the unfortunate association of many of the leaders of the Church with anti-Semitic and militaristic tendencies. Over against this influence, he sees the work of the liberal theologians and their concern with the social meaning of Christianity, but he finds the traditional emphasis on the inwardness and the individualism of religious experience so strong that no effective influence for social reconstruction and no real curb on state absolutism were produced.

The growth of a distinctively German type

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of humanism, or cultural paganism—of which Rosenberg and Hitler are now the heirs—is traced in a clearcut fashion. The central place given to "race," to "blood," to "might," and to "national honor" in the current thought of Germany is shown to have been due in no small measure to the past failure of the Church to relate Christianity to social life and ideals.

The social crisis that followed the War is skilfully portrayed in its effect upon religious ideas and institutions. "Social Democracy" is described as having been very hostile to the Church at first, though later developments modified that hostility. The section which records the origin and growth of the Nazi movement and the way in which it undertook to capitalize the sanctions of religion for extreme nationalism and anti-Semitism is a brilliant summary of what has taken place during the last few years.

Finally, there is a well-drawn and authoritative picture of the emerging conflict between Church and State, which has now reached its climax in the heroic struggle of a group of Protestant pastors against surrendering to "Caesar" the things that are not Caesar's but God's.

No one who wants to be thoroughly conversant with the problem of the relation of Church and State in the modern world can afford to ignore this highly competent study of the situation in which that conflict has come to sharpest focus.

Dr. Means's volume, while the most complete study, available in English, of the present situation in the religious life of Germany, is also invaluable as a portrayal of the various theological movements in Germany during the last two or three generations. The significance of Adolf Harnack, of Ernst Troeltsch, of Rudolph Otto, of Paul Tillich, of Karl Barth, and many of the other great figures in German Protestantism, stands out in much clearer light as analyzed in the light of what is happening in Germany today. No one who wants to have an adequate picture of German Christianity, both in its major developments of thought and in its present crisis, can afford to be without this book.

Dr. Means holds degrees from Yale, Oxford, and Columbia. He has taught psychology and philosophy at Oberlin College and Berea College and has done missionary work in the Dutch East Indies and the Orient. This present study of the German situation was made while he was personally on the scene.

(*Signed*) S. Parkes Cadman
Harry Emerson Fosdick
Francis J. McConnell
Charles C. Morrison
Howard Chandler Robbins
Editorial Committee

Other Highly Commended Books

As optional volumes from which any member of the Religious Book Club has the privilege of selecting a substitute for the volume reviewed above, or as additional books which may be ordered, the Editorial Committee highly recommends the following new publications:

THE FUTURE LIFE

By F. A. M. Spencer. 320 pages. $3.00

THE new flood of books on the subject of immortality significantly indicates the awakening of the modern spirit to ultimate life problems. This volume by Dr. Spencer begins with eight valuable chapters tracing the idea of immortality historically. Suggestive chapter headings are: "Hebrew Searchings," "Jewish Imaginings," "Greek Speculations," "Theological Interpretations." The remaining six chapters discuss psychic communications and metempsychosis, and the author's own theology of immortality in the light of Biblical criticism and modern science.

Even nationalism has invaded the theological field, Dr. Spencer shows. He describes the remarkable movement of religious and national idealism called Polish Messianism. During Poland's bitter generations of oppression her poets and prophets developed a doctrine of the nation's rejuvenation and of its unique mission to man-

About the Author

"THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S: The Genesis of the German Church Conflict" is the result of intensive study on the scene by the author, Paul Banwell Means, who went to Germany to complete his researches following scholarly preparations at Columbia University.

Born in Orleans, Nebraska, in 1894, Dr. Means was graduated from Yale University in 1915 and, as a Rhodes Scholar, received his B.Litt. degree from Oxford University and his Ph.D. degree from Columbia University. He served in the Y. M. C. A., with the British Army in Mesopotamia and India during the World War. He was on the Philosophy faculty at Berea College, Kentucky, and was Assistant Professor of Psychology at Oberlin College, Ohio.

His studies of the Church in Germany antedated the coming into power of Hitler, whose program of Nazification of the Church has given sudden new direction to Dr. Means's inquiry. He pursued his interest in Germany under the shadow of Hitler's forces and amid the din of the conflict into which the German Church was precipitated. "Things That Are Caesar's" is the fruit of that exciting experience.

$2.50

THINGS THAT ARE CAESAR'S

(A Religious Book Club Selection)

THIS brilliant book seeks out the source of the fierce strength which has flooded into the Christian Church in Germany since Hitler raised his hand against it. All other organized bodies in the German Republic vanished. The Church alone refuses to be conquered.

Whence came the strength for this struggle? Where did the Church leaders find the reservoir of simple courage? How do their humble followers, exposed to Nazi terrorism, dare to put back the pastors whom Hitler deposed, dare to defy the Nazi leaders whom Hitler nominated for the emptied pulpits, dare even to defy the police when the Nazis arrested their pastors?

This stubborn, single-handed fight by the Church against heavy odds has heartened all people who believe in the Christian religion. In this inspiring book, "Things That Are Caesar's," Paul B. Means discovers the sources and shows us the solid bed-rock on which true religion stands.